SUFFOLK COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

COVID-19 VACCINE GUIDANCE FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

A guide to request, store, and administer COVID-19 vaccines

Updated: February 7, 2022

Introduction

It is Suffolk County's goal to distribute COVID-19 vaccines equitably throughout our county. For us to achieve widespread COVID-19 vaccine uptake, it is critical not only to ensure widespread access to vaccines, but also to increase confidence in and demand for the vaccine among vaccine-hesitant persons. Survey data show that people are more likely to get the vaccine if it is recommended or offered by a medical professional they trust. Increasing the availability of COVID-19 vaccines to trusted community primary care providers (PCP) and medical offices is, therefore, a top priority for the County and the Department of Health Services (SCDHS). As such, the department has developed this guidance document for County providers to enroll into the New York State COVID-19 Vaccine Program and begin administering doses in their communities.

NOTE: This guidance is for the following COVID-19 vaccines only:

- Pfizer Gray Cap (ages 12+) NDC 59267-1025-04 (6 dose vial);
- Pfizer Orange Cap (ages 5-11) NDC 59267-1055-04 (10 dose vial);
- Moderna (ages 18+) NDC 80777-0273-99 (10 dose vial).

As other vaccines become available, this guidance will be updated accordingly. Please review the guidance within this document, using the below checklist to plan for vaccine distribution.

CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Register for NYSIIS and the NYS COVID-19 Vaccine Program
- ☐ Review vaccine transport, storage & preparation procedures and best practices
- ☐ Review clinical aspects of vaccine administration
- ☐ Request the vaccine
- ☐ Promote your vaccination site

Questions and inquiries regarding further guidance may be directed to the SCDHS Pharmacy, using the contact information provided in Section 2.

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Section 1: NYS COVID-19 Vaccine Program Enrollment

Prior to requesting COVID-19 vaccines from either NYS or the SCDHS Pharmacy, providers must first register for the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS) and enroll in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine personal identification number (PIN) by following the steps below:

1. Obtain NYSIIS access. If you already have NYSIIS access skip to Step 2.
    a. Complete NYSIIS training (live or recorded webinar). Detailed training information is available at: http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/information_system/status.htm
    b. Obtain access to NYSIIS
        i. If you register for a webinar training (live or recorded), NYSIIS access will be granted for you in the training application AND the live system.
        ii. If you are trained by a coworker or utilize the NYSIIS tutorials on the Health Commerce System, your organization's NYSIIS Administrative User must grant you access to the live system. If you are unsure who the NYSIIS Administrator is for your organization or have additional questions regarding training options, can contact the NYSIIS Help Desk at 1-866-389-0371 or nysiishelpdesk@hp.com for account set up.
    c. Log in to NYSIIS via the NYSDOH Health Commerce System: https://commerce.health.state.ny.us

2. Enroll in the NYS COVID-19 Vaccination Program through the Health Commerce System (HCS) application "COVID-19 Vaccine Program Provider Enrollment." For guidance, please review NYS's How to Enroll with NYSDOH COVID-19 Vaccination Program document or the step-by-step tutorial video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8xY0QvUvEE. Once you are enrolled as a COVID-19 vaccination provider, you will receive a PIN that will allow you to order COVID-19 vaccine through New York State and/or manage your vaccine inventory in NYSIIS. Please note that this PIN is distinct from the PIN providers may already have to manage other vaccines through NYSIIS.

3. Help
    a. For HCS access or account issues: Commerce Accounts Management Unit (CAMU) Help Desk at (866) 529-1890 or hinhpn@health.state.ny.us
    b. For NYSIIS user access or questions on how to use the system: NYSIIS Technical Help Desk at (866) 389-0371 or nysiishelpdesk@hp.com
    c. For general program or policy questions: NYSIIS staff at (518) 473-2839 or nysiis@health.state.ny.us

Source: www.coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-information-providers.

Section 2: Requesting the Vaccine

Before requesting vaccine, make sure appropriate storage conditions and administrative procedures can be maintained at your site (see Sections 3 and 4, respectively).

Providers may request vaccine from the Suffolk County Department of Health Services by submitting a request via the SCDHS Central Pharmacy COVID-19 Vaccine Order Form.

Questions may be directed to the Director of Pharmacy, using the information below:

- Dr. Hanaa Ibrahim PharmD
  Director of Pharmacy
  3500 Sunrise Hwy, Great River, NY 11739
  631-854-0149
  Hanaa.ibrahim@suffolkcountyny.gov

Once an order is submitted, the SCDHS pharmacy will initiate the vaccine transfer process with the provider, using the COVID-19 Vaccine Transport Tracking Sheet. In order to pick up a vaccine order, the provider will need to bring:

- Cooler, packed according to the COVID19 Vaccine Transport Tracking Sheet (refrigeration only);
- Temperature Log;
- ID for the person picking up the vaccine.

If a provider is unsure how many doses they should request, it is recommended that they conduct a short survey of their patients to estimate the number of interested people.

Alternatively, providers may request vaccine directly from NYSDOH using the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS).

Section 3: Vaccine Transport, Storage & Preparation

Providers must ensure proper storage and handling procedures, in compliance with CDC standards, are in place to safely transport, store handle, and prepare vaccines.

a. **Vaccine Temperature Monitoring and Preparation.** The CDC requires the use of a specific type of temperature monitoring device (TMD) called a "digital data logger" (DDL) to accurately monitor temperatures, including how long a unit has been outside the recommended temperature range (referred to as a "temperature excursion"). DDLs must have a current and valid Certificate of Calibration Testing. For specific storage, handling, and preparation information, please refer to the CDC's COVID-19 Vaccine: Quick Reference Guide for Healthcare Professionals. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine requires additional considerations for using a TMD with the thermal shipping container. Refer to the CDC's Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Storage and Handling Summary for more information.

   Temperature excursions must be reported to New York State Department of Health and the vaccine manufacturer before administering vaccines from affected vials. Affected vials should be set aside and labeled "DO NOT USE" until efficacy is determined by the manufacturer. Refer to the NYS's COVID-19 Vaccination Program Temperature Excursion Report for more information.

b. **Transporting Vaccine.** Portable vaccine refrigerator units are considered the best option for vaccine transport. Qualified containers and pack-outs are types of containers and supplies specifically designed for use when packing vaccines for transport, are also acceptable to use for emergency or short-term vaccine transport. Temperature must be monitored during transport. For more information, please refer to NYS's COVID-19 Vaccine Program Guidance for Vaccine Transport.

c. **Expiration date and Beyond Use Date.** The Pfizer and Moderna vaccine expiration dates printed on the vial reflect the stability of the product as long as it remains under proper storage temperature indicated by the manufacturer. The 'Beyond Use Date' is calculated from the time the vaccine has been removed from its designated storage unit or has been reconstituted.. Once vaccine has reached its expiration or beyond-use date, contact the manufacturer for guidance on whether it can still be used. If instructed to dispose of vaccine, dispose of the vial (with any remaining vaccine) and packaging as medical waste.

d. **Reporting Wasted Vaccine**. All vaccine providers should minimize the amount of vaccine that goes unused, consistent with CDC guidance, which states that while enrolled providers must continue to follow best practices to use every dose possible, it should not be at the expense of missing an opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person when they are ready to get vaccinated. There is currently no penalty for incurring wasted doses, though they do need to be reported through NYSIIS. The process for reporting wasted doses is described in NYS's COVID-19 Vaccination Program Reporting Vaccine Wastage.

Section 4: Clinical Aspects of Vaccine Administration

Before ordering any vaccine, it is essential to ensure that proper procedures are in place to administer the COVID-19 vaccine, and that staff are appropriately trained.

a. **Staff Training.** Vaccine-specific training for healthcare professionals regarding each of the COVID-19 vaccines is available from the CDC: CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Training Module.

b. **Staff Safety.** Providers must ensure that staff involved in COVID-19 vaccine administration are provided with recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) for patient contact, including face masks and eye protection. Providers should implement policies for the use of face coverings for vaccine recipients whenever possible.

c. **Eligibility & Consent.**

Pfizer-BioNTech (orange cap)	Pfizer-BioNTech (gray cap)	Moderna
Ages 5 through 11 years*	Ages 12 and older*	Ages 18 and older

*Vaccine selection should be based on age only (not weight). If a child is turning 12 between their first and second dose, they should receive the 5-11 year old formulation (orange cap) for their first dose and the 12 and older formulation (gray cap) for their second dose.

If the patient is a minor (under the age of 18), consent must be obtained from their parent or legal guardian. Printable consent forms can be found at the following links: for ages 12 and over; for ages 5-11. Consent of either the patient (for adults) or their parent or legal guardian (for minors) should be documented in the patient's vaccination record.

d. **Screening.** All patients receiving the COVID-19 vaccine must be screened to make sure they do not have active COVID-19 disease, as well as for contraindications and precautions to vaccination. For more information, please see the CDC's Pre-vaccination Checklist for COVID-19 Vaccines and Guidance on Contraindications and Precautions.

e. **Provision of Fact Sheet.** Prior to administering a vaccine, patients should receive the appropriate Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers available at the FDA's Multilingual COVID-19 Resource page. Updated (EUA) Fact Sheets in multiple languages can also be found on this site. Providers are also encouraged to support the V-Safe vaccine safety program, providing the V-safe Information Sheet, which includes instructions on how to register and complete health check-ins.

f. **Injection.** Administer the vaccine by intramuscular (IM) injection in the deltoid muscle. Injection in the anterolateral thigh is also acceptable.

g. **Observation**. Patients receiving the vaccine should be observed for at least 15 minutes after vaccination to monitor for adverse vaccine reactions. 30 minute observation is recommended for patients with a concerning allergy history, including a history of an *immediate* allergic reaction of any severity to another vaccine or injectable therapy (within 4 hours of administration) or history of anaphylaxis due to any cause.

h. **Responding to anaphylaxis.** Healthcare personnel should be aware of signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis following vaccine administration and be prepared to treat such patients by administering epinephrine and transporting patients to the hospital via EMS. Emergency supplies including epinephrine pre-filled syringes or EpiPens must be readily available on site.

i. **CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Record Card.** Each patient should be given a record of their COVID vaccination on one of the CDC COVID-19 vaccination record cards included with each shipment of vaccine. The patient's record card should be completed with their name, date of birth, vaccine information (Vaccine name, lot number and expiration date), and the date and location of vaccine administration. Patients presenting for their first dose of vaccine should be given a return date for their second dose, which can be written on the back of the card. Patients should be instructed to keep their CDC record card in a safe place, and to bring it back with them for all future vaccine appointments.

j. **Primary vaccination series.** The Pfizer-BioNtech and Moderna vaccines are a 2-dose series. The Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine is given 21 days apart and the Moderna vaccine is given 28 days apart. The second dose should be administered as close to the recommended interval as possible. Two doses given up to 42 days apart have been shown to result in adequate immunity. However, two doses administered more than 42 days apart are considered to be a complete vaccine series, and no additional doses should be administered. More information regarding dosing schedule in the event of possible interruptions can be found in the Intervals section of the CDC's Clinical Consideration guidance page.

   Every effort should be made to determine which vaccine product was given as the first dose in order to complete the primary vaccine series. In exceptional situations in which the mRNA vaccine product given for the first dose cannot be determined or is no longer available, any available mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may be administered at a minimum interval of 28 days between doses to complete the vaccine series.

k. **Additional doses for immunocompromised people.** An additional (3rd) dose is recommended for persons ages 5 years and older with moderate to severe immune compromise, to be given 28 days after the second dose of vaccine. Use the same vaccine product and dosage given for the first 2 doses. This additional dose is considered part of the primary vaccine series. Please note that there is currently no recommendation for an additional dose for people who received Janssen as their primary vaccine.

   Moderately or severely immunocompromised persons ages 12 and older who received a COVID-19 vaccine listed for emergency use by WHO but not approved or authorized by FDA should receive an additional primary dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine at least 28 days after receiving the second vaccine dose of their primary series

   Please see here for more information, please refer to the Addition Primary Dose section of the CDC's Clinical Consideration guidance page.

l. **Booster doses.** A booster dose is recommended for persons 12 and older, 5 months after receipt of their second dose. Immunocompromised persons are also eligible for a booster dose 5 months after receipt of the addition (3rd) dose.

If a patient received Janssen as their first dose, they can receive either the Pfizer-BioNtech or Moderna vaccine as a booster dose 2 months after their Janssen dose.

Those vaccinated outside of the United States are eligible for a single booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, 5 months after completion of their primary vaccine series. More information regarding booster doses can be found on the CDC's COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots guidance page.

k. **NYSIIS Reporting.** Providers must accurately and completely report all vaccine administered through the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS) within 24 hours of administration, and providers must maintain up-to-date inventory in such system. NYSIIS reporting is critical both to allow verification of an individual's vaccination status and for the state to maintain accurate vaccination metrics.

l. **Reporting Adverse Events.** All vaccine providers MUST report serious adverse events to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Serious adverse events are defined as: (1) Death; (2) Inpatient hospitalization or prolongation of existing hospitalization; (3) A persistent or significant incapacity or substantial disruption of the ability to conduct normal life functions; (4) A congenital anomaly/birth defect; or (5) An important medical event that based on appropriate medical judgement may jeopardize the individual and may require medical or surgical intervention to prevent one of the outcomes listed above.

   In addition, providers should also report any errors in administration of the vaccine even if there is no adverse reaction, cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS), and cases of COVID-19 that result in hospitalization or death following vaccine administration.

   Reporting to VAERS can be done by calling this toll free number: 1-800-822-7967 or submitting a form online (include Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 Vaccine EUA in box #18, line 1 of the form).

m. **Medicaid Reimbursement.** Medicaid now provides reimbursement or COVID-19 vaccine administration an enhanced rate for vaccination with counseling, and for vaccination counseling as a standalone visit which could occur in person or via telehealth. Refer to NYS's Medicaid Update for more information.

Section 5: Promote Your Vaccination Site

Providers can use various means of communication to inform their patients that the vaccine is now available at their facility. Sending a letter or email informing patients that the vaccine is now available at your facility is a great, direct way to communicate with patients. Similarly, signage inside of the facility can alert patients visiting the facility for other reasons.

Once operational, your site may also be listed on the CDC'S VaccineFinder website, www.vaccines.gov, which includes a nationwide database of available vaccine sites to attract a wider audience. For more information on VaccineFinder, please review VaccineFinder's Provider Information page.

Section 6: Resources

- CDC Clinical Considerations
- CDC Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines
- CDC Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination
- CDC Vaccine Recipient Education Toolkit
- NYSDOH COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ
- NYSDOH COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Providers
- NYSDOH COVID-19 Educational Assets
- SCDHS COVID-19 Vaccination Center
- SC COVID-19 Recovery Resources